

**CAPSULE SUMMARY**  
**BA-1021**  
**405 Pennsylvania Avenue**  
**East Towson, Baltimore County**  
**Circa 1880**  
**Private**

The Gothic Revival-style dwelling, constructed circa 1880, is located at 405 Pennsylvania Avenue in East Towson. The history of East Towson dates from the purchase of one-and-a-quarter acres of land by Daniel Harris in September 1853. This is believed to be the first documented African-American landholding in Towson, and is among the oldest such ethnic enclave in Baltimore County. Further, manumitted slaves and/or descendents of former slaves, many of who were owned by Charles Ridgely, populated the neighborhood. Hampered by the low economic status of the residents, development in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was slow, increasing after the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The setting of the property, building styles, and construction materials were guided by the limited economic status of the residents and their desire to establish a neighborhood of their own without the assistance of white architects, builders, and craftsmen. By 1927, the community was ninety-five percent improved with single-family dwellings, social buildings, a school, and religious structures.

The wood frame dwelling is located on a sloping lot. Set on a random rubble stone foundation, the dwelling rises two-and-a-half stories in height with a center gable dominating the façade. A one-story, three-bay wide porch stretches across the first story of the façade, featuring a shed roof supported by replacement square wood posts. The centered entry consists of a single-leaf, wood-paneled door with a transom that has been boarded shut. The façade is pierced by five 1/1 replacement windows, two at the first story and three at the second. A round-arched window, which has also been boarded shut, adorns the center gable. A single interior brick chimney rises above the cross gable roof, which has been covered with asphalt shingles.



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## 7. Description

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Inventory No. BA 1021

### Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

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Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Constructed circa 1880 in the Gothic Revival style of architecture, the wood frame dwelling is located on a sloping lot along Pennsylvania Avenue in East Towson. Set on a random rubble stone foundation, the dwelling rises two-and-a-half stories in height with a center gable dominating the façade. A one-story, three-bay wide porch stretches across the first story of the façade, featuring a shed roof supported by replacement square wood posts. The centered entry consists of a single-leaf, wood-paneled door with a transom that has been boarded shut. The façade is pierced by five 1/1 replacement windows, two at the first story and three at the second. A round-arched window, which has also been boarded shut, adorns the center gable. A single interior brick chimney rises above the cross gable roof, which has been covered with asphalt shingles.

## 8. Significance

Inventory No. BA-1021

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**Specific dates** 1880 ca. **Architect/Builder** Unknown

**Construction dates** 1880 ca.

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

The Gothic Revival-style dwelling, constructed circa 1880, is located at 405 Pennsylvania Avenue in East Towson. The history of East Towson dates from the purchase of one-and-a-quarter acres of land by Daniel Harris in September 1853. This is believed to be the first documented African-American landholding in Towson, and is among the oldest such ethnic enclave in Baltimore County. Further, manumitted slaves and/or descendents of former slaves, many of who were owned by Charles Ridgely, populated the neighborhood. Hampered by the low economic status of the residents, development in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was slow, increasing after the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The setting of the property, building styles, and construction materials were guided by the limited economic status of the residents and their desire to establish a neighborhood of their own without the assistance of white architects, builders, and craftsmen. By 1927, the community was ninety-five percent improved with single-family dwellings, social buildings, a school, and religious structures. Many of the current homeowners and tenants living in the neighborhood are descendents of the first African-American residents.

East Towson as a whole is representative of an important phase of architectural development in Baltimore County, illustrating the dilution of popular architectural styles to more efficiently meet the needs of the neighborhood, and the builders' untrained abilities to execute the fashionable ornamentation. Thus, East Towson provided lower cost housing in a more suburban neighborhood, rather than the urban setting their economic status typically perpetuated.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. BA-1021

- Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland.* Philadelphia, PA: G. M. Hopkins, 1877.  
Baltimore County Historic Inventory.  
Brooks, Neal A. and Eric G. Rockel. *A History of Baltimore County.* Towson, MD: Friends of the Towson Library, Inc., 1979.  
*Map of Baltimore County.* Philadelphia, PA: G. W. Bromley, 1915.  
Scharf, J. Thomas. *History of Baltimore City and County From the Earliest Period to the Present Day: Including Biographical Sketches of Their Representative Men.* Philadelphia, PA: Louis H. Everts, 1881. Reprinted by Higginson Book Company, Salem, MA.  
Sidney, J. C. *Map of the City and County of Baltimore, Maryland, from Original Surveys.* Baltimore, MD: James M. Stephens, 1850.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property .20 Acre  
Acreage of historical setting Unknown  
Quadrangle name Towson Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The dwelling is located at 405 Pennsylvania Avenue in East Towson in the ninth District of Baltimore County. Historically, it has been associated with Tax Map 70A, Parcel 117 since its construction circa 1880.

## 11. Form Prepared by

name/title	R. Weidlich and K. Baynard, Architectural Historians		
organization	EHT Tracerics, Incorporated	date	November 20, 2001
street & number	1121 5th Street NW	telephone	202.393.1199
city or town	Washington	state	DC

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
DHCD/DHCP  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023  
410-514-7600

# East Towson: Planimetric Data



Prepared by:  
Baltimore County Office of Planning  
401 Bosley Avenue  
Towson, Maryland 21204  
June, 2001



Scale

1 inch = 200 feet

1:2400

100 0 100 200 Feet

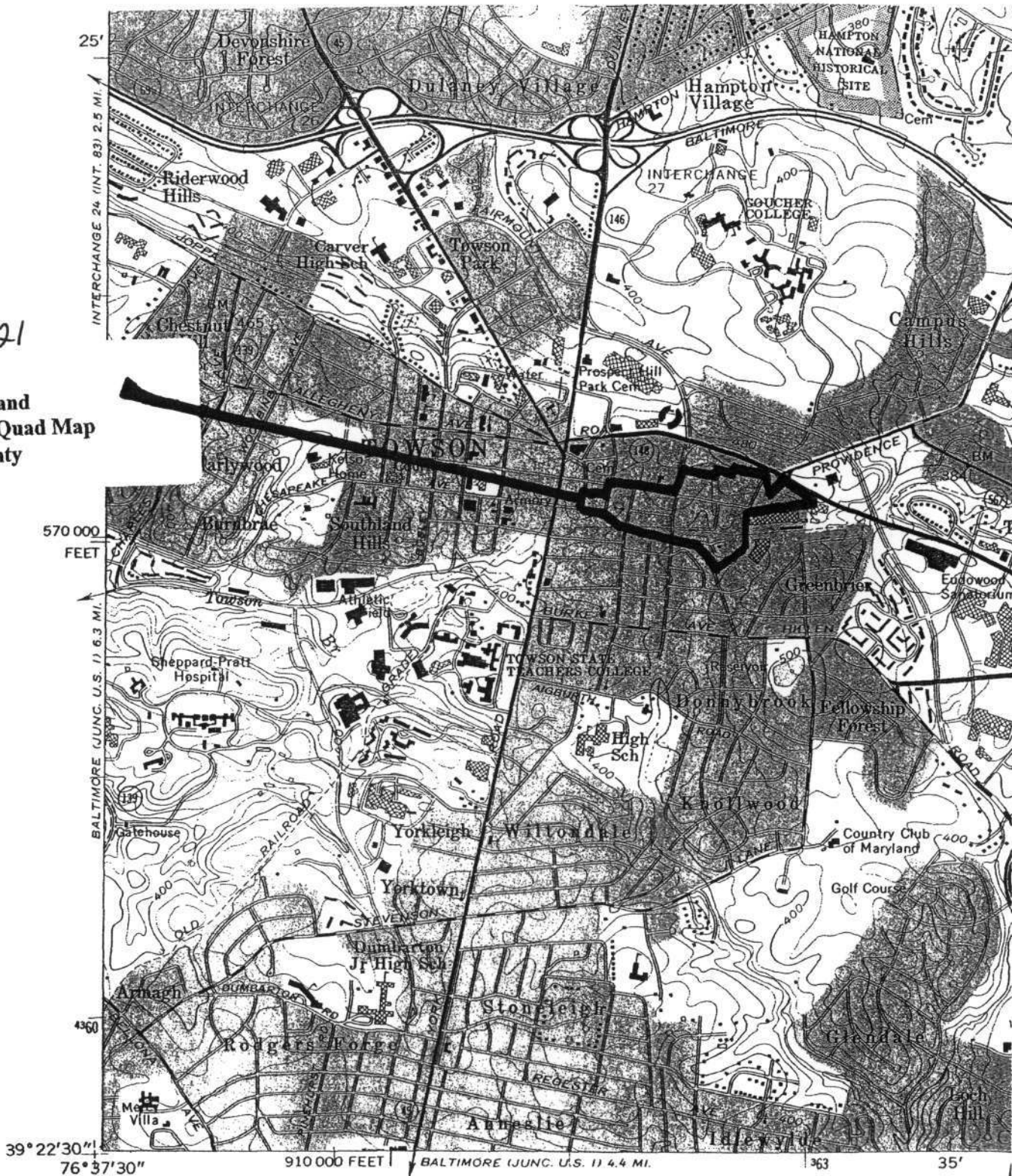
Legend

- Study Area Boundary
- Paved Roads
- Unpaved Roads
- Paved Parking / Driveways
- Hydrographic Features
- Buildings
- Vegetation

Data Sources:  
Planimetric Data: Baltimore County OIT GIS Services Unit (1:2400)  
Parcel Boundaries: Baltimore County OIT GIS Services Unit (1:2400)  
Study Area: Baltimore County Office of Planning (1:2400)  
Coordinate System:  
Maryland State Plane: NAD83/91 Horizontal Datum  
Elevations in Feet: NAVD83 Vertical Datum  
Date of Data Capture: March 1996  
Scale of Data Capture: 1" = 100'



BA-1021  
 East Towson  
 Towson, Maryland  
 Towson USGS Quad Map  
 Baltimore County



1 BALTIMORE WEST  
 5662 1 SW

Mapped by the Army Map Service  
 Edited and published by the Geological Survey  
 Control by USGS, USC&GS, USCE, and Maryland  
 Bureau of Control Surveys and Maps

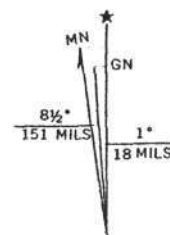
Culture and drainage in part compiled from aerial photographs  
 taken 1943. Topography by planetable surveys 1944  
 Culture revised by the Geological Survey 1957

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
 10,000-foot grid based on Maryland coordinate system  
 1000-metre Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
 zone 18, shown in blue

Red tint indicates areas in which only  
 landmark buildings are shown

Revisions shown in purple compiled by the Geological Survey from  
 aerial photographs taken 1966 and 1974. This information not  
 field checked

Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



UTM GRID AND 1974 MAGNETIC NORTH  
 DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET





BA-1021

HOUSE, 405 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE

BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

MD-SHP0

SOUTH ELEVATION, VIEW LOOKING NORTH

1 of 2

TRACERIES, 10/2001



BA-1021

HOUSE, 405 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE

BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

MD-SHPD

SOUTHWEST CORNER, VIEW LOOKING NORTHEAST

2 of 2

TRACERIES, 10/2001

## INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

HERRMAN HOUSE I

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

405 Pennsylvania Ave.

second

CITY, TOWN

Towson Md. 21204

Baltimore

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

VICINITY OF

COUNTY

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT  
☐ BUILDING(S)  
☒ STRUCTURE  
☐ SITE  
☐ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC  
☒ PRIVATE  
☐ BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS  
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED  
☐ UNOCCUPIED  
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS  
☐ ACCESSIBLE  
☐ YES: RESTRICTED  
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED  
☐ NO

## PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE ☐ MUSEUM  
☐ COMMERCIAL ☐ PARK  
☐ EDUCATIONAL ☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE  
☐ ENTERTAINMENT ☐ RELIGIOUS  
☐ GOVERNMENT ☐ SCIENTIFIC  
☐ INDUSTRIAL ☐ TRANSPORTATION  
☐ MILITARY ☐ OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Agnus Herrmann

Telephone #:

823-4236

STREET &amp; NUMBER

231 Burke Ave

CITY, TOWN

Towson Md. 21204

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Baltimore County Courthouse

Liber #:

Folio #: 2462:466

STREET &amp; NUMBER

401 Bosley Ave.

CITY, TOWN

Towson Md. 21204

STATE

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

BA-1021 - 405 Pennsylvania

before 1898

This attractive frame house retains much of its original woodwork. The house is two stories high and consists of two rooms across the front with a stair along the center wall. Several additions follow to the rear. The main facade is distinguished by a porch and a cross gable.

**7 DESCRIPTION****CONDITION**

☒ EXCELLENT  
☐ GOOD  
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED  
☐ RUINS  
☐ UNEXPOSED

**CHECK ONE**

☒ UNALTERED  
☐ ALTERED

**CHECK ONE**

☐ ORIGINAL SITE  
☐ MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

405 Pa.

This two-story frame house has a cross gable featuring an arched 2/2 window. The balustraded porch running across the three-bay facade has a shed roof supported by simple square posts. The central transom-topped door has a 6/6 sash window to either side. Three windows light the second floor on the facade. The gable ends are inferestrated except for cellar lights.

The floor plan consists of a small entry space followed by the central stair, with a parlor to either side. The newel post is square, as are the balusters. The stair is open along its west side. A molding with three beads running lengthwise down its center appears along the framing of the stair. The handrail curves in deeply at the sides and bulges out at the bottom in curves wider than at its top. The interior architraves are curved in the center flanked by double beads. The mantel along the east room's west wall has a shelf which is curved in plan. The shelf support molding is a quirk ogee with chamfer. The mantel pilasters are chamfered. Three raised shield-shaped panels with chamfered edges alternate across the mantel face with two lozenge-shaped panels. Long, thin door panels feature a quirk ogee and astragal molding.

A two-story kitchen addition runs to the northwest. Its room is wainscotted in thin beaded boards. A one-story addition along the kitchen's east side houses two rooms, one on either side of a semi-enclosed porch. An exterior entrance to the stone cellar is located at the northeast corner of the main house. The house is sheathed in grey asbestos shingles.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY



## 8 SIGNIFICANCE

BA-1021

### PERIOD

☐ PREHISTORIC  
☐ 1400-1499  
☐ 1500-1599  
☐ 1600-1699  
☐ 1700-1799  
☐ 1800-1899  
☐ 1900-

☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC  
☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC  
☐ AGRICULTURE  
☐ ARCHITECTURE  
☐ ART  
☐ COMMERCE  
☐ COMMUNICATIONS

### AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

☐ COMMUNITY PLANNING  
☐ CONSERVATION  
☐ ECONOMICS  
☐ EDUCATION  
☐ ENGINEERING  
☐ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT  
☐ INDUSTRY  
☐ INVENTION

☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
☐ LAW  
☐ LITERATURE  
☐ MILITARY  
☐ MUSIC  
☐ PHILOSOPHY  
☐ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

☐ RELIGION  
☐ SCIENCE  
☐ SCULPTURE  
☐ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN  
☐ THEATER  
☐ TRANSPORTATION  
☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)

### SPECIFIC DATES

### BUILDER/ARCHITECT

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This property is found on the 1898 map of Towson. Early records indicate that Fredruk J. Green Jr. was one of the previous owners of this and two other properties owned by Mrs. Herrmann.

This house is owned by one of the enterprising females of the Towson community. Many of the Towson females continue to manage property left them by their spouses, sometimes under a tremendous financial strain.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Marcus Pollock/coordinator Merry Stinson/architect

7/77

ORGANIZATION

Committee to Save E. Towson/Towson Ymca

DATE  
823-8870

STREET &amp; NUMBER

600 W. Chesapeake Ave.

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Towson Md. 212 04

STATE

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RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438



BA-1021

The Hermann House<sup>TM</sup>

405 Pa. Ave.

Towson, Md.

South

Merry Stinson

1977